August 24, 2010

Arcuri Highlights Efforts to Preserve Funding for F136 Competitive Engine, Including Letter to President to Avert Veto

Arcuri and GE Executives: Growing Workload on F136 Engine Will Add 50 to 75 New Jobs

NORWICH, NY - At a press conference held today, U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) joined General Electric (GE) Executives to announce plans to add 50 to 75 new jobs at Unison Industries in Norwich, NY. This announcement comes as Arcuri continues efforts to preserve funding for the F35 Joint Strike Fighter's (JSF) F136 Competitive Engine (built by General Electric and Rolls Royce), which includes sensors and other engine components produced by Unison. Just last week, Arcuri sent a letter with other lawmakers urging the President to sign legislation that provides continued funding for the competitive engine.

"This is a perfect example of how increasing competition is a win for everyone involved," **said Arcuri**. We know from past experience that a competitive engine will save taxpayers billions of dollars and strengthen national security. And because Unison Industries produces a number of components for the competitive engine, we can now expect to add new jobs right here in Norwich, NY. It is clear that supporting this program as it nears completion is the right thing to do for our nation and local community."

"We (GE Aviation) are very excited about the performance of our Norwich operation and are planning for continued investment to support growth at this site," **said Michael Chanatry, General Manager, Electronics COE, GE Aviation Supply Chain**. "Today we are announcing plans to transfer additional civil and military production work to our Norwich operation to take advantage of our productive workforce here in Upstate New York. This new work, together with our growing workload on the F136 engine for the Joint Strike Fighter, is expected to add 50 to 75 new jobs over the next 12 months. GE and our Unison

workforce is grateful for the excellent support it has received from Congressman Michael Arcuri and his entire staff for helping to show the value of an engine competition on the Joint Strike Fighter. Mike fought hard in Washington for an engine competition and the jobs it would protect here in Norwich."

The Letter sent by Reps. Steve Driehaus (OH-1), John Tierney (MA-6) and Arcuri urges President Obama to not veto the Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the FY11 Defense Appropriations Act, or any other legislation that includes funding for the JSF competitive engine program. Additionally, the letter includes information that members of Congress have learned over the past year from the Final Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel, which supported the merits of Competition.

In May, Arcuri led efforts to defeat an amendment to the FY11 NDAA that would have stripped the $485 million authorized for Congress to spend to continue development of the F136 competitive engine. Before the legislation was debated by the House, Arcuri also used his position on the House Rules Committee to demonstrate the advantages of continuing the program and block other amendments that would have combined the vote on the competitive engine with other popular measures.

This legislation only authorizes funds for the F136 competitive engine. Later this year, Congress will consider the annual defense spending bill, which will contain the actual appropriation of funding for Department of Defense programs, including the JSF. However, Congress can only appropriate funds up to the amount contained in the National Defense Authorization Act. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense recently approved a draft spending measure that included funding for the F136 competitive engine next year. It is expected that the Subcommittee's draft will be incorporated into a larger spending measure that Congress will vote on later in the year.

The F-35 Strike Fighter, capable of short takeoffs and vertical landings, will eventually replace 95 percent of the United States' entire fighter jet fleet in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. Its engine must have cutting-edge technology to deliver the power and thrust necessary to meet these take-off and landing requirements. For the past 15 years, Congress has funded the development of the F136 competitive engine, at a total of over $3 billion since 1996. If the program were to be canceled now, that previous investment would be lost.

Once finished, the F136 competitive engine will compete annually with another engine, built by

another company, to determine which version of the engine is purchased for the F-35 jets that the Department of Defense purchases each year. History has shown with the other tactical fighter jet programs, particularly the F-16, that competition between engine designs limits cost over-runs, significantly improves fleet readiness and limits the risk of grounding planes because of a defect, which could jeopardize national security. On the F-16 fighter, competition between engine designs yielded a savings of 21% over original cost estimates. The engine for the F-35 program is currently projected to cost $100 billion over the next 40 years. Cost savings like the F-16's could therefore save taxpayers over $20 billion on the F-35 engine.

Click hear to read the letter sent to President Obama